



ANNUAL REPORT

2024/25

THE GREAT OUTDOORS PROJECT

Helping You to Thrive in Nature...

The Great Outdoors Project is one of the many projects delivered by the mental health and wellbeing charity S2R Support to Recovery. We know from independent research and the testimonies of our own participants, that connecting people with nature as part of a group in an outdoor activity, an indoor workshop, or an online session is a great way to improve emotional and physical wellbeing, reduce anxiety, create social connections and learn about both ourselves and the natural world.

For over 10 years, S2R has been offering all* adults in Kirklees the chance to take their first steps into nature to benefit their wellbeing. Anything that builds your connection with nature can be good for your wellbeing, whether it's a walk out on the moors, or making soap indoors using natural products. We can help you get active with our walking groups, learn new skills like nature identification or aromatherapy, connect with people in our growing and nature craft groups, notice what is around you with Art in the Park and mindful walking, and give back to our environment and your community by improving biodiversity with outdoor volunteering.

**Participants must be able to work in a small group setting, either independently or with the help of a carer.*



"THANK YOU FOR TODAY, IT WAS JUST WHAT I NEEDED - A BIG BIG DISTRACTION. IT'S A YEAR TODAY SINCE I TRIED TO NOT BE HERE ANYMORE AND ABOUT A YEAR WITH S2R.

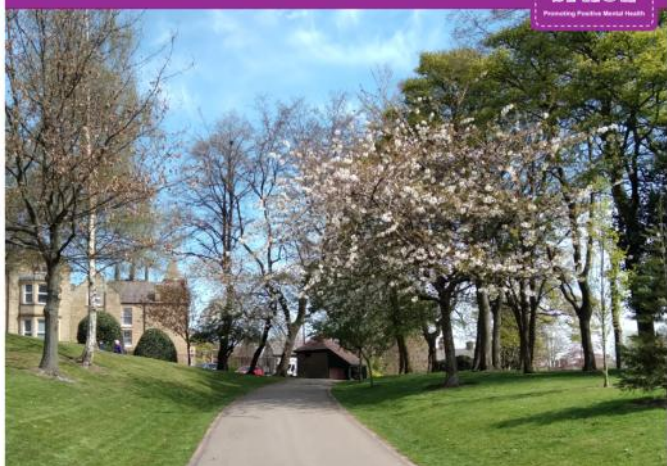
I HAVE FELT A BIT ALL OVER THE PLACE MENTALLY AND DID TALK MYSELF OUT OF COMING TO THE WOMEN'S CENTRE ABOUT TEN TIMES BEFORE I MADE MYSELF COME OUT. ANYWAY, I'M GLAD I DID THOUGH!"

"WE MET LAST WEEK WHEN YOU WERE OFF DAWN. WE DID TWO LAPS AND WENT FOR A COFFEE. I DON'T LIKE TO MISS MY ROUTINE, SO IT WORKED WELL FOR ME. IT'S BECAUSE YOU SET US UP SO WELL DAWN!"

Support to Recovery

PROMOTING POSITIVE MENTAL HEALTH

**S2R
CREATE
SPACE**
Promoting Positive Mental Health



GREENHEAD PARK WELLBEING WALKS

Walking is one of the best forms of exercise there is, and it's free! So come and enjoy the great outdoors and peaceful landscapes of Greenhead Park with us.

Our walks take place at 1pm every Wednesday, come rain or shine.

Meet us outside the entrance to Huddersfield Leisure Centre for a gentle stroll around the park, looking at points of interest on the way and then heading back to the leisure centre. The whole walk takes about an hour and everyone is welcome!

Please book in advance of your first session by emailing us at: contact@s2r.org.uk
Wear clothing and footwear suitable for walking and feel free to bring a drink with you too

Registered Charity 1122199 | Limited Company 6418312

Friends of
**Greenhead
Park**



WINTER TREE ID WALK

**IN GREENHEAD PARK
ON MONDAY 24TH FEBRUARY
FROM 1 - 3PM**

To book your place, please
call: 07933 358800 or email
us at: contact@s2r.org.uk



Join S2R and TGO Volunteer Hazel (an Arboricultural Officer for Kirklees Council) for a gentle winter walk around the beautiful Greenhead Park & learn how to identify lots of different tree species without their leaves.

Meet us at the Bowling Pavilion, next to the Bowling Green & please wear clothing and footwear suitable for the weather.

Registered Charity 1122199 | Limited Company 6418312

"A REALLY INTERESTING WALK. LOTS OF NEW INFORMATION FROM A VERY KNOWLEDGEABLE HAZEL. THANK YOU!"

"YOU NEED A REMINDER SOMETIMES TO DO SOMETHING [FOR YOUR WELLBEING], IT DOESN'T HAVE TO BE SOMETHING HARD."

"MARCESCENCE - WORD OF THE DAY. WHEN A TREE HANGS ON TO ITS LEAVES THROUGH WINTER. WE ALL REPEATED IT THROUGHOUT THE WALK!"

This Year at S2R

The Great Outdoors Project is a place where our passionate facilitators use their creative skills to connect you with nature to improve your wellbeing. We actively seek everyone's ideas and encourage you to help shape our journey together. So thank you to all our wonderful facilitators, partners and participants for making our project the special place that it is.

Jason Kerry *Manager of The Great Outdoors Project*

Operating This Year...

We entered into this, our first year of a new commission, with a solid and proven model to reach as many adults in Kirklees as possible, aiming to give them the tools they need to connect with nature to improve their wellbeing. We provide small group sessions facilitated by our staff and we raise awareness of the outdoor wellbeing opportunities provided by all our partners large and small. Sometimes we work with our partners to develop new projects often drawing down additional funding so we can do even more to help people.

Our 'in-house' work is delivered via regular sessions, one-off workshops and occasional courses at our base on Brook Street and at our own locations such as the polytunnels, the allotment and at community venues.



As well as looking after wellbeing, we see it as critical to our work that we engage with partners to contribute to greater strategic goals such as: looking after our environment with the Repair Café, volunteering sessions in nature such as our moss project with The National Trust and helping to set up voluntary groups. This approach contributes to what is sometimes called 'recovery capital'. We have committed to deliver our project in a way that gives social value; working in schools, libraries and community hubs, helping businesses look after their staff wellbeing, volunteering time in the community and helping people gain work experience and confidence.

This year, we are particularly proud to have helped set the Dewsbury Library Walking Group on the road to being self-led. They now regularly travel independently to distant locations for scenic walks as well as their friendly Friday sessions. This has been achieved by building trust and genuine partnership between the participants, S2R and partners like Community Plus and Kirklees Libraries. Our Birkby Evening Walks and the Norman Park Walk, Jog, Run groups have also followed a similar route.

As well as attending community events we have been trying new ways to link with different sections of our community such as our work with Moonlight Trust and Manor Field School exploring the teaching of the Quran and its links to our connection with the natural world. Our staff team wellbeing sessions and evening and weekend activities have helped engage the working population.

We actively promote volunteering; from planting at our polytunnels to supporting others, delivering sessions or joining our Board of Trustees. Our participants also help us generate new ideas for sessions that meet their needs, such as Art in the Park.

We were also pleased to have worked with research fellows from Huddersfield University this year. They embedded themselves in our groups, brought their special facilitation skills and experienced a taste of outdoor wellbeing in the process. From their experience, they were able to report on the efficacy of our approach in their book "Cultures of Creative Health" which can be found here: <https://unipress.hud.ac.uk/plugins/books/>.

Looking After Our Staff

Staff well being is important to us at S2R. We value lived experience of mental health, and as such we need to pay attention to supporting our staff. We have a great culture of talking about our wellbeing and mutual support. It's not always easy to follow the advice we suggest to our participants, but we can encourage each other. We offer regular supervisions where personal wellbeing is unpacked, but we recognised that not everything can or should be managed in-house. To that end, we subscribe to Mindful Employer to access external counselling. In these days of hybrid working, our staff social WhatsApp takes the place of a water cooler. Here we can share anything from pet photos to tips on catching the Northern Lights so we can stay connected and check in on one another. On occasion, more informal staff gatherings might find us celebrating with Karaoke in our cellar!





We Delivered...

1,198
HOURS OF
FACE-TO-FACE
SESSIONS

1,866
VOLUNTEERING
HOURS

169
PARTNERS
WORKED
WITH

574
SESSIONS
DELIVERED

20,869
WEBSITE
VISITORS

81,636
PEOPLE
REACHED ON
FACEBOOK

4,154
ATTENDANCES AT
OUR SESSIONS

802
NAMED PEOPLE
ATTENDED
TGO SESSIONS

Outcomes Framework

Every quarter, we ask our Great Outdoors Project participants how the project is helping them, using some very simple questions. We are always listening out for how our work is helping individuals, their families and the wider community. Throughout this report you will find statistics, quotes and observations drawn from our monitoring. We use all this information to help us shape our programme in the future.

Connecting People with Nature and Each Other

When we are isolated, we can lose confidence and miss out on important social interactions that are so valuable to our wellbeing. The Great Outdoors Project engages participants feeling the effects of loneliness, helping them to feel more connected. When we are more connected to others, we feel valued and part of something bigger. When we are connected, more opportunities to get involved with things that can benefit our wellbeing present themselves.

Cemetery Road Community Allotment

Our regular groups are a great place to build long term connections. Longer sessions, delivered every week mean we can build stable communities of participants with welcoming cultures that are the kind of places new people want to return to. Our allotment in Birkby has been at the very heart of our delivery since day one, providing connection with nature and other people along with homegrown produce throughout the year.

Art in the Park

Some of the regulars on our Wednesday Walk group showed an interest in art. Following this lead, we set up Art in the Park. Sitting out in public with a sketchbook can require confidence but our group found strength through their established friendships from the walk group. They now enjoy the experience and the positive comments from passersby.

**"I LOVE GETTING TOGETHER WITH YOU ALL,
IT REALLY DOES GIVE ME A BOOST."**

**"COMING HERE REALLY HELPS MY MENTAL
HEALTH, THERE IS A COMMUNITY HERE."**

**"I'VE BEEN LOOKING FORWARD TO IT.
IT'S NOT THE SAME WALKING ON YOUR OWN."**

SINCE ATTENDING THIS PROJECT,

99%

OF PARTICIPANTS SAID
CONNECTING WITH NATURE HELPED
IMPROVE THEIR WELLBEING



Being Active

Being active makes us feel good and helps to improve our wellbeing. TGO offers a wide range of opportunities for people to be active.

Active Birkby Club

This year, we worked with Yorkshire Sport to get people moving more in Birkby, a diverse community where people are less likely to be active. We tried a variety of approaches; taster sessions, social media campaigns, signposting to local activities and evening activities. Our Evening Walks group explored local green places from May to October and then continued through the winter months as a self-led group until the clocks went forward again. Our Birkby Walk, Jog, Run group followed a similar pattern and both groups were powered by local interest and WhatsApp communications.

Walking Groups

Walking groups have been a strong feature this year as they are a safe and low impact way to start a journey with nature. In Dewsbury, our Friday Wanderers have been exploring and the self-led Library Walking Group headed out to Flamborough and Bolton Abbey alongside regular local walks. Our walking groups come in a variety of flavours; from step counting, distance and speed to mindful nature walks discovering plants and birds or social walks to share problems and see friends.

SINCE ATTENDING THIS PROJECT,

69%

OF PARTICIPANTS SAID THEY
KEEP MORE **ACTIVE** AND LOOK AFTER
THEIR **PHYSICAL HEALTH** BETTER



**“THIS WALK DOES ME GOOD! I’VE LOST
WEIGHT AND GOT BETTER CIRCULATION!”**



**“JOURNALING IS ACTUALLY VERY
THERAPEUTIC! THANK YOU FOR
INTRODUCING IT TO ME.”**

SINCE ATTENDING THIS PROJECT,

72%

OF PARTICIPANTS SAID THEY
SPEND MORE TIME **LEARNING** NEW
THINGS THAT INTEREST THEM

Learning

As we get older, we sometimes forget to make time to learn new things. But learning is a powerful way to improve our confidence and self-esteem as well as unleashing our curiosity and creativity, creating new perspectives and new connections in the brain.

Winter Tree ID

To many people a tree is just a tree, but there are many different species which can be identified even without their leaves. We are lucky to have a TGO volunteer who used our services a while back and is now a full-time Arboriculture Officer with Kirklees Council. Described as a natural communicator by our participants, there is very little she doesn't know about trees and she is passionate about sharing her enthusiasm; exploring bark textures, canopy forms and buds. Delivered in partnership with the Friends of Greenhead Park we can be sure this learning is being passed on to others who use the park too.

Evening Workshops

S2R are committed to improving the wellbeing and mental health of the whole community with early intervention and prevention, so it is important that we think about the working population who can't access our activities during the day. This year, we have been delivering popular evening sessions at Brook Street like pizza making, aromatherapy and natural dyes. These sessions have proved to be a great place not just to learn something new but also as a way to have some quality time with friends or family members and to meet new people in the workshop.

Notice

Noticing things around us can help us to focus on the present and avoid patterns of thought that leave us reliving the past or worrying about the future. This can help us feel more grounded and content with our lives.

Moonlight Trust

Dewsbury Country Park is a large greenspace in North Kirklees, but despite being near dense populations, many people don't know about it. S2R teamed up with Moonlight Trust for a campaign to engage more of the local community with this space and the global climate crisis. We used the special knowledge of our partners to emphasise the duty the Quran places on Muslims to respect nature, and worked with Muslim businesses, schools and mosques to provide meaningful engagements from practical conservation to natural weaving and opportunities for reflection on nature. Find out more at: [www.youtube.com/watch?v= 7EZEHUOKTc](https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=7EZEHUOKTc).

Cultures of Creative Health

It's fantastic to have partners who are keen to work with our participants. This year, we drew on the expertise of research fellows and arts practitioners from The University of Huddersfield. They embedded themselves into some of our groups and helped each other see their spaces in different ways through storytelling, art and photography. You can find out more on p148 of their *Cultures of Creative Health* book at: <https://unipress.hud.ac.uk/plugins/books/>. Participants were then invited to a book launch and exhibition showcasing their work at the University.



"YOU DON'T REALISE HOW BEAUTIFUL NATURE IS UNLESS YOU'RE OUT IN IT!"

SINCE ATTENDING THIS PROJECT,

71%

OF PARTICIPANTS SAID THEY TAKE MORE NOTICE OF THE THINGS AROUND THEM



SINCE ATTENDING THIS PROJECT,

50%

OF PARTICIPANTS SAID THEY GIVE MORE OF THEIR TIME, SKILLS AND THINGS TO OTHERS

Give

Giving our time and skills to friends, the environment and the community has been shown to have positive effects on our mood, cholesterol levels and even weight loss.

Volunteering with S2R

This year, we have been very proud to welcome Bronwyn, a new volunteer, to our team. Bronwyn takes time out of her working week to join us each Wednesday to help plan and deliver our allotment sessions. She is a hit with the participants and a great asset to S2R with her extensive horticultural knowledge and kind personality.

Outdoor Volunteers

Each week, our team of outdoor volunteers set off to all corners of Kirklees and help improve public green spaces for everyone's benefit.

National Trust Volunteering

Building on our partnership with the National Trust, we have been helping to restore moorlands by propagating Sphagnum moss for replanting, as well as learning about moss and how it protects moorlands from erosion and fire. Find out more: www.youtube.com/watch?v=9384rUPJ49k.

"I WANT TO HELP WITH LITTER PICKING TO MAKE THIS AREA NICER FOR ALL OF US WHO LIVE HERE."

Confidence

Getting outdoors and connecting with nature whilst building on The Five Ways to Wellbeing can bring about some profound changes for our participants, including improved confidence and the ability to make important life decisions which helps them to take ownership of their own mental health and wellbeing. We achieve this by creating safe spaces and by giving people the opportunity to push their own boundaries whilst still feeling supported. Taking part in our workshops and connecting with others gives people confidence to do things that they would not do before.

Social Creatives

These sessions cater for the younger participants at S2R. They are a great opportunity to learn skills from our staff team and from each other, but perhaps most importantly are a place to practice social skills and gain confidence. Many of our participants have gone on to employment, volunteering opportunities and higher education after being involved with this group

Garden Upcycling

Helping people gain confidence in using hand tools and creating things from recycled wood is a great way to generate instant self-esteem! Our participants arrive having never used a saw before and leave with their own, bespoke item, a sense of satisfaction and the skills to do it all again when they get home.



“COMING HERE HAS REMINDED ME OF THE IMPORTANCE OF INTERPERSONAL SKILLS. I’VE WORKED IN THE NHS, AND QUITE HIGH UP THERE’S A CERTAIN WAY OF TALKING. WORKING WITH THE ALLOTMENT GROUP HAS BEEN SO REFRESHING AND REALLY REMINDED ME WHY I LOVE WORKING WITH PEOPLE.”

“I WASN’T GOING TO COME TODAY. I’VE BEEN SO STRESSED ABOUT HAVING TO MOVE FLAT, MY MENTAL HEALTH HAS SUFFERED. I KNEW I’D FEEL BETTER TO GET OUT AND JOIN YOU, AND IT HAS HELPED TO SEE YOU ALL AND TALK. I THINK THE FRESH AIR AND EXERCISE HAS HELPED TOO.”

“I MADE A WOODEN PLANTER WITH BYRON AT S2R AND HAVE LOVED SEEING THE HERB GARDEN HERE AT THE [BIRKBY] LIBRARY GROW. I DECIDED TO PLANT HERBS IN MY PLANTER AT HOME. IT’S WONDERFUL COOKING WITH MY GRANDCHILDREN AND PICKING FRESH BASIL FROM THE GARDEN!”

SINCE ATTENDING THIS PROJECT,

60%

OF PARTICIPANTS FELT MORE **CONFIDENT** TO SELF-MANAGE AND COPE BETTER

Website Statistics

- ⇒ 20,869 total page views
- ⇒ 10,198 site sessions
- ⇒ 5,685 unique visitors to the site
- ⇒ 5,260 brand new visitors



Development, Vision & Targets for Next Year

Five More Years!

S2R have been recommissioned by Kirklees Council to deliver five more years of The Great Outdoors Project! This is a great opportunity for us to look at our operation. Here are some of our priorities for 2025/2026:

Include More Formal Volunteering

We want to offer more opportunities for volunteers to contribute to the delivery of our service and to accredit our volunteering process.

Champion Community Volunteering Opportunities

We want to encourage the creation of new nature-based voluntary groups and to support our community partners to become more trauma-informed and welcoming to volunteers who may have poor mental health.

Environmental Pledge

The Great Outdoors Project would be nothing without nature and the natural world. To this end, we have committed to the Kirklees Council Environmental Pledge helping us work towards becoming net zero.

Working Together Better Partnership

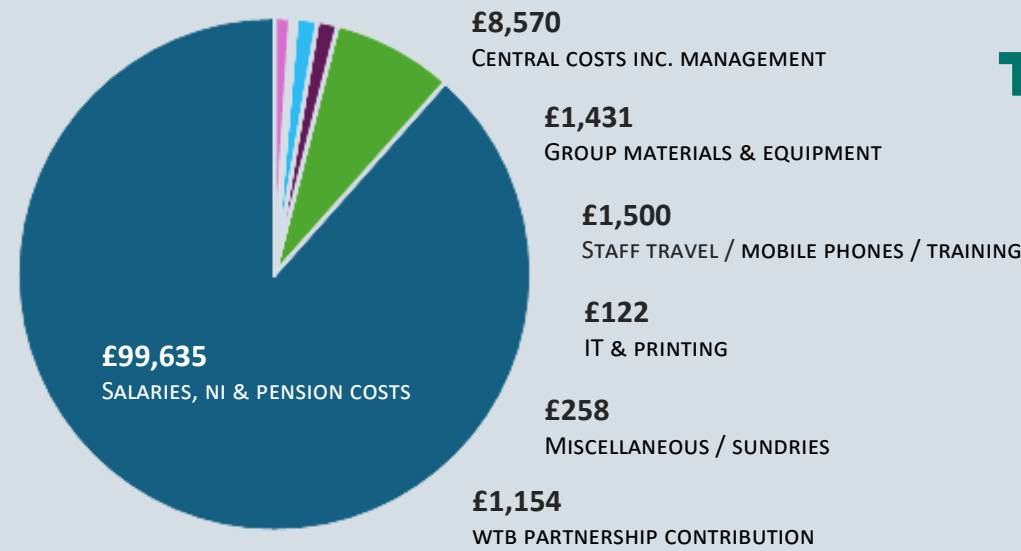
S2R will work more closely with other commissioned partners in the Working Together Better Partnership.

External Funding

We will seek to enhance our outdoor wellbeing offer by bringing in external resources and funding.

Social Value

S2R will continue to operate a delivery model that seeks to benefit the wider community, in addition to all of the individuals who access our service.



TGO Finances

The Working Together Better Partnership

In 2024/25, we continued to play an active role in the Working Together Better Partnership (WTBP), a Kirklees group of seven local mental health charities. Together, we offer open and friendly support for adults to help them find their way to better mental wellbeing by boosting their confidence, building resilience and making connections.

Across the partnership we provide:

- Creative activities
- Nature based and wellbeing activities
- Information and support
- Advocacy
- Employment and peer support
- Counselling
- Groups using therapy approaches

This year, we've deepened our partnership, brought in new people, built trust, and started to shape a shared identity that values each partner and our joint work.

We collaborated across four groups:

- Steering Group for setting direction,
- Operations Group for projects and practice
- Comms Group for our shared voice
- Neurodiversity Group for developing ideas to better support neurodivergent people in our teams and communities.

Two central team members joined the Partnership this year, one focusing on strategy and one on diversity and community engagement. They've helped us drive forward big goals like shared communications and participation, developing a new neurodiversity project and beginning our Theory of Change as part of evaluating how we work together.

We also co-designed and co-facilitated successful community events:

- A WTBP Partnership Day for staff across the partnership to connect and learn
- A Wellbeing Fair for World Mental Health Day in Dewsbury
- Our first Volunteer Celebration event
- A lively and buzzing International Women's Day gathering with wellness activities and workshops

Our Comms Group has been busy supporting these events. They have also developed a new website (which launched in April) and a tagline so it's easier for people to access the right support no matter which partner they come through.



TGO Case Studies

Every project we run here at S2R has its own unique impacts and we have found that statistics can only tell us so much about the nature of our service. The same is also true of our participants. Every person that sets foot into The Great Outdoors Project comes with their own story, and experiences their own unique journey whilst they are with us.

The staff team here at S2R listen carefully to what our participants have to say, so we can tell personal stories that really highlight the difference our project makes to individuals, local communities and to the environment. These stories are then transformed into case studies, like the one pictured here, which show the everyday detail of our work at S2R, beyond the scope of an annual report.

You can read Geanina's Story case study pictured here and lots more besides on our website: www.s2r.org.uk/case-studies.

Partnership Work and Co-production

This year The Great Outdoors Project has worked with 169 partners; forming mutually beneficial partnerships with organisations from large national charities and local government to small, constituted community groups. This is because connecting people with the environment to improve wellbeing is on so many people's agendas, and when it is done well, in partnership with strategic bodies and local communities, it can generate positive outcomes that are more than the sum of their parts for everyone and deliver enormous social value:

"The garden group should all be very proud of what they've done out there, especially gardening in the rain and cold. It really has made a difference. They all look happy and have been grafting away out there today."

- Staff member at Birkby and Fartown Library

"Just to say what a pleasure it was to come and join in your lovely Bonkers for Conkers event last Wednesday. The weather was just amazing and it was lovely to be able to practise the Qi-gong workshop outside in the fresh air, under the beautiful autumnal coloured trees. Thanks to everyone who organised the event."

- Andrea at Carers Count



Our primary aim when working with partners is to improve wellbeing, but in doing so, we connect people with their communities, create social capital, improve greenspaces, reduce waste, improve climate awareness and link families with nature-based activities that are good for children and adults alike. This is a very valuable free resource at a time when we are all facing a cost-of-living crisis.

Co-production

Co-production and a person-centred culture is all part of our trauma-informed approach here at S2R. In plain English, that means we are listening to what our participants want and involving them as much as possible in deciding what we do, how we do it and even in delivery where we can.

Participants often suggest new ideas and our default position is yes! We will make the activity safe, get the right person in to deliver it, and even look for funding if necessary. We listen out for ideas in sessions, on social media and in our Annual Survey. Examples of this in action are Art in the Park, which is a fusion of our art and walking groups, the Tree ID walk led by a participant, and our young people at Social Creatives who not only set their own agenda, but often lead their own activities too. Strategically, at least three of our board members have used our service in the past, including our Deputy Treasurer who got to know us by volunteering with us.

We have had great success this year in helping participants set up their own independent groups and making them successful in their own communities.



The Great Outdoors Project

To find out more about this project call/text: 07541 095 455
email: contact@s2r.org.uk, or visit: www.s2r.org.uk

S2R Create Space, 5-7 Brook Street, Huddersfield HD1 1EB

Scan the QR Code to view this report online:



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